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Representing American Innovators

November 14, 2014

By Hand and Email

Hon. Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman
United States Senate
Committee on the Judiciary
473 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Chuck Grassley, Ranking Member
United States Senate
Committee on the Judiciary
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Grassley:

We write to express our support for the nomination of Michelle K. Lee for the office of Under Secretary for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce. We are a diverse group of lawyers, academics, and executives who work in the fields of patents and trademarks, and we represent a broad spectrum of American innovators. Each of us has worked directly with Ms. Lee or is familiar with her work, and we believe she will be a superb Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

The jobs, goods, and services that make up our economy depend on robust innovations that are protected by patents and trademarks. Protection of innovation, enshrined in the Constitution, begins at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. The Director of the USPTO is the most important and visible protector of our nation's commitment to innovation. Ms. Lee's career and dedication to public service reflect a lifelong commitment to, and an exceptional ability to preserve and bolster, the promotion of innovation.

Ms. Lee has been a patent lawyer for 20 years and has extensive experience with the legal and management issues that arise at the USPTO. She currently serves as the Deputy Under Secretary and Deputy Director of the USPTO, a position she has held since January of 2014. She successfully opened the USPTO's new Silicon Valley Office and served as its Director from 2012 to 2013. Beginning in 2011, Ms. Lee served as a Member of the USPTO's Patent Public Advisory Committee.

Ms. Lee held significant management responsibility prior to her government service. From 2003 to 2012, Ms. Lee was the Deputy General Counsel and Head of Patents and Patent Strategy at Google Inc., where she built the team and program from the ground up. She was a Partner and an Associate at Fenwick & West LLP from 1996 to 2003 and an Associate at Kecker & Van Nest LLP from 1994 to 1996. Ms. Lee held two prestigious judicial clerkships, for Judge

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Vaughn R. Walker in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, and for Judge Paul R. Michel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, which is the court responsible for reviewing actions by the USPTO. Ms. Lee received a B.S. in electrical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where she graduated at the top of her class, an M.S. in computer science also from MIT, and a J.D. from Stanford Law School where she served on the law review. Before law school, she worked as a computer scientist at Hewlett-Packard Research Laboratories and the MIT Artificial Intelligence Laboratory.

Ms. Lee co-founded a non-profit organization, the "ChIPs," which is dedicated to supporting and promoting the advancement, development, and retention of women practicing IP law or involved in innovation. The ChIPs has grown from its start in Silicon Valley to become a national women's organization that includes and inspires women in all the fields involving innovation including pharmaceutical science, materials science, biotech, and medical devices. Upon confirmation, Ms. Lee will be the first woman and the first ethnic minority to head the USPTO.

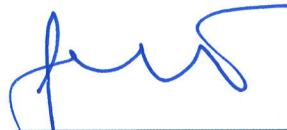
In each of her prior positions, Ms. Lee has consistently displayed honesty, wide and deep legal knowledge, strong management skills, unfailing civility in dealing with everyone, the willingness to listen to all perspectives and the ability to collaborate and work with all sides of an issue, and a commitment to promoting the progress of science and the useful arts. She is a model of the talents and manner that our legal system, at its best, seeks to foster and spread.

We urge the Committee to hold a hearing promptly and to approve Ms. Lee's nomination to this important post.

Respectfully,



Susan M. Davies



John Thorne



Mallun Yen

* Although we list our affiliations below, all of us are signing this letter in our personal capacities.

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